A

SERMON

Preach'd at

St. *Hilary's* Chapel

IN

DENBIGH,

On occasion of the late General Mortality in the Year 1728.

By Gr. Jones, M. A. *Rector of that Pariſh*

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To the Honoured Sir *Robert Salusbury Cotton* of *Leweny* Baronet, and Member of Parliament for *Cheshire*.

SIR,

YOUR Approbation of this plain practical Discourse from the Pulpit gives me encouragement to hope, it may meet with the same favourable reception from the Press; which from a Gentleman of your Honourable Rank and Extraction, eminent Parts, and solid Judgment, must be of Considerable Advantage to recommend it to the Publick; And I fear, the Performance is such, that it will be thought to stand in too great a need of it, in regard it contain's no sublime Notions, no uncommon Thoughts, and no bright and beautiful Periods to gratifie the Palate of the Curious, which are accomplishments that no Composition of mine can lay any Claim or Pretensions to. And yet since it Treats of so weighty and important a Subject, and has the Countenance of your Authority to sup-

port it; I truſt, I may be allow'd to ſay, that ſome practical Hints will be found in it by ſuch as will afford it a ſerious Peruſal, that may conduce both to remind them of their Duty, and excite 'em to the Practice of it And in caſe it ſhould in ſome meaſure Anſwer this End, I preſume, I ſhall need no other Apology for its Publication. However, ſuch as it is, I beg leave to Preſent it to you as a poor Acknowledgment of the ſincere Reſpect and Gratitude due to you from

SIR,

Your moſt obliged late Chaplain

and aſſured

Humble Servant

Gr. Jones.

A SERMON

Preach'd at St. *Hilary*'s Chapel in *Denbigh*, on occasion of the late General Mortality, in the Year 1728.

John IX. Verse 4. *I must Work the Work of him that sent me, while it is Day, the Night cometh wherein no Man can Work.*

THESE are the words of our Blessed Saviour, wherein he declares that God sent him into the World, and set him a work to discharge during his Abode therein; But tho' what he deliver's here bears a particular reference to Himself; Yet is it in a lower Sense equally applicable to every Man; for we are all sent into this World to accomplish the Work, which God has set us, and have time and sundry Opportunities afforded us for this End: And since no Body know's how soon Death may surprize and utterly deprive us of all this time and opportunities of Accomplishing it, it must be of the utmost Concern and Importance to us to set about it in due time; and we cannot neglect or defer it without running the most terrible Risks, and exposing our Selves to the greatest Dangers

gers; ſo that every one of us may expreſs himſelf in the words of my Text, *I muſt Work the Work of him that ſent me, while it is Day; the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.*

Which words thus Accommodated to the general State of Mankind naturally lead me to offer to your Conſideration the Four following Particulars, and accordingly I ſhall ſeverally ſpeak to 'em in their Order.

Firſt, I ſhall conſider what this Work is we are ſent into the World for, and wherein it conſiſts. *Secondly*, Our obligations to a careful and vigorous Diſcharge of it, being the plain import of the firſt part of my Text, *I muſt Work the Work of him that ſent me. Thirdly*, The time and excellent Opportunities afforded us for this end expreſs'd in theſe Words, *while it is Day. Fourthly*, I ſhall conſider the great Danger of neglecting or deferring it, implyed in the laſt part of my Text, *the Night cometh wherein no Man can Work.*

I. Then I am to conſider what this Work is we are ſent into the World for, and wherein it conſiſts.

Now ſince it is a Maxim univerſally receiv'd, that God Created nothing in vain; but all things that he made are for ſome wiſe Ends and Purpoſes; ſince in the Creation he has endow'd Man with Reaſon and Underſtanding, that qualify him for the knowledge and ſervice of his Creator, and given him an immortal Soul that will ſurvive the Body and exiſt for ever; hence it is obvious to infer, that he deſign'd him here only as a Candidate or Probationer for another State, wherein he will be either unconceivably

bly happy or miserable to all Eternity, according to the general Tenor of his present Conduct and Behaviour.

And if we appeal to common Experience and Observation, we shall find that we have a natural desire of Happiness implanted in us, and that all our earthly Enjoyments are too mean and empty to satiate our craving Appetites, and fill up the vast capacities of our Souls, and so afford us entire Satisfaction; which is a plain Indication, that Man was not made for created Objects; and consequently that God himself that made him, is the only true Centre of his Happiness, he alone his supreme and sovereign Good.

Now to serve God here being the only means of enjoying him Eternally hereafter, this by necessary Consequence must be the main End we are sent into the World for. And accordingly as the Scripture testifies, * that God *created all things for his own Glory*; so are we enjoyn'd therein to make this the great End and Scope of all our Actions: And indeed what Employ can we possibly be engaged in, that is so highly worthy of our Time and Care, as that great and excellent Work that God has set us to Discharge, which is both our highest Priviledge, Honour and Preferment, and our most desirable Liberty and Freedom.

And as the service of God is the great End we are here design'd for; so the better to recommend it to us, he has been pleas'd of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness to order and dispose the Measures of our Duty, in such a manner that in serving of him we

* *Isaiah* 43. 7. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20.

should

should work out our own Salvation; and for our still further Encouragement, to set before us everlasting Happiness as the Reward of our Service, and that we might be in a better Capacity of compassing this great End, he lastly allows us this term or Season of our Lives, with all the excellent Advantages we enjoy therein, to qualify our selves for the Attainment of it, as shall be more particularly Consider'd under the Third head.

Our great Work then in this present Life is to prepare our selves for an happy Eternity hereafter by serving God, and working out our own Salvation, and that of others also as far as in us Lies, by a faithful and conscientious discharge of all the Duties we owe to 'em.

And this work I conceive, may be properly said to consist in paying an universal regard to God's reveal'd Will; which as it requires our stedfast belief and profession of all the fundamental Doctrines and Articles of the Christian Faith, summarily contain'd in our Creeds; so doe's it, 2dly, require of us a sincere and faithful discharge of all the moral Duties, as they are explain'd and enforced in the Gospel under these three Heads of Piety and Devotion towards God, Justice and Charity towards Men, and Sobriety and Temperance with respect to our Selves: And for the better Belief of these Doctrines, and performance of these Duties, it requires 3dly, a due and careful Observance of all the instituted means and instruments of conveying to us the Aids and Assistance of Divine Grace to enable us therein, as private and publick Prayer, hearing Reading, and Meditating upon the word of God, observing the Lord's Day, and Receiving the Holy Communion, &c.

Thus

Thus having briefly consider'd what this Work is we are sent into the World for, and wherein it consists; I proceed in the 2d place, to offer to your Consideration the Obligations we lie under to a faithful and vigorous discharge of it. And to this End let us 1st. consider the vast importance and indispensable Necessity of it, as what is our only true Interest and Concern, insomuch that all our other Affairs are no more than an unprofitable Amusement, a meer impertinence or a vain curiosity in respect of it; for so highly important a Work is this, that no less than our everlasting Happiness or Misery depends upon it, and so absolutely Necessary, that it is as much as our Souls are worth to neglect it: And if these should be involv'd in everlasting Misery and Ruin, the consequence is unavoidable, that our Bodies likewise at the Resurrection must partake of the same Fate; And therefore whatever else we neglect, this must be minded, or we are Ruined for Ever; for tho' other things may be dispens'd with, there is no dispensing with this one thing necessary; since it is the very End we are sent into the World for, the very Business which the Son of God came down from Heaven to instruct us in, and our only Qualification for eternal Life and Happiness.

To this vast importance and indispensable necessity of the Work let us add 2dly, The unconceivable Majesty and Excellency of the Master that enjoin's it, and his Relation to us as our Creator, Preserver and Redeemer; that this is the work of God, that work, which the Supreme Majesty of Heaven and Earth has set us to Discharge, in respect of whom in the words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *all the Nations of the World are but as the small Dust of the Ballance or a Drop of the Bucket*, nay as nothing, and are accounted no-

thing to Him as leſs than nothing even Vanity it ſelf. Now what are we, who are ſuch meer Nothings to deſpiſe the Authority, diſpute the Commands, and reject the ſervice of ſo infinitely great and tranſcendently excellent a Being, who can rend the Heavens and make the Foundations of the Earth to Quake? and how horridly ungrateful and diſingenuous muſt we be, if we decline the ſervice of ſo noble and generous a Benefactor, to whom we are beholden for all we have, or hope for? And how wrechedly Stupid, and Senſleſs of our own Intereſt, if we do not endeavour to recommend our ſelves to him, in whoſe Hands we are, and upon whom our Lives, our Happineſs, our all ſo entirely depend, that he needs but withdraw his Mercies to make us Miſerable, or his ſuſtaining Power to reduce us into Nothing?

And for as much as there is nothing we are commonly more affected with, than Views of Benefit and Advantage; as a further Motive to the diſcharge of this great Work, let us ſeriouſly conſider the ineſtimable Gain, that will Accrue from it, both here and hereafter as the vaſt Dignity and Honour of being retain'd in the ſervice of the moſt high God, the great ſecurity and Freedom, and the laſting Pleaſure, Peace and Satisfaction it is attended with, its natural Tendency to promote all the ends of our ſecular Intereſt, its entitling us to the bleſſings of Divine Providence, as Health and long Life, Honour and Reputation, proſperous Circumſtances, a happy Poſterity, &c. according to the expreſs Teſtimonies and repeated Declarations of holy Writ; And particularly the infinite Bliſs and Happineſs that is infallibly ſecur'd to us as the Wages of it; in another Life for what glorious things are every where ſpoken of the Heavenly Jeruſalem, which is propos'd to us, as the Prize of our high Calling, the

Recompence

Recompence of our Services, and the Reward of our Labours! and is not every thing that is excellent and desirable in this World borrow'd to set forth and represent it to us in holy Writ, as Crowns, Kingdoms, Treasures, Rivers of Pleasures, Fountains of living Waters, &c. Now this being the Case, who would not undergo some Labour to obtain so glorious a Prize? who would not be at some Pains to gain such an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory? who would not be employ'd in such a work for a Time to be happy for Ever, for shall we toil and moil for the fading enjoyments of this Corruptible world? and should we not in all Reason be more careful and sollicitous to secure that incorruptible Crown and eternal Inheritance reserv'd for us in Heaven.

And as it cannot but be a great Encouragement to us, to find that this Work is Practicable, and such as may be Perform'd by us; and as Examples have generally a peculiar Influence upon our Practice; let us 4thly consider how the best Men in all Ages have Acted in this important Affair, who had no other Assistances of Divine Grace, than what are offer'd to us all; how Careful and Circumspect, how Courageous and Undaunted, how Warm and Zealous they approv'd themselves in the service of their great Lord and Master! for what Dangers would they not Engage in, what Labours would they not Undergo, what Sufferings would they not Endure in order to be accounted worthy to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? nay how many of them in the Primitive Ages of Christianity have parted even with their lawful Pleasures and Enjoyments, and forsaken all, that they might gain this Treasure in Heaven? now this being the avow'd Practice, Conduct and Behaviour of these Celebrated

Heroes, that have led the Van, and gone before us in our ſpiritual Warfare; how can we expect to receive ſo vaſt a Recompence and obtain ſo ineſtimable a Reward, which coſt them ſo much Care and Labour to attain, if we do not endeavour in Imitation of them to qualify our Selves for the Attainment of it, by a faithful diſcharge of the great Work requir'd of us.

But after all that has been offer'd upon this Head, I conceive, there cannot be a more powerful Argument to Convince us of our Obligations to work the work of him that ſent us, than to conſider Laſtly ſome of the Laws, Precepts and Declarations of the holy Scriptures, in reference to this Affair, as being the great Rule and Standard, whereby we are to Square our Lives here, and to be for ever acquitted or Condemn'd hereafter. For this is apparently what our bleſſed Saviour requires of us, when he enjoyns us to labour for the Meat, that endureth to everlaſting Life: To ſeek the Kingdom of God in the firſt Place; † *to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, and to love the Lord our God with all our Heart, with all our Mind, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength*: And to let us ſee how extreme dangerous it is to be Cool and Indifferent therein, we need no farther Satisfaction, than that Declaration of his in the Revelation concerning the Church of *Laodicea*, * *becauſe thou art neither Hot nor Cold, I will ſpew thee out of my Mouth*; and elſewhere he expreſly declares § *that wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction; and many there be that enter into it; But that ſtrait is the Gate and narrow*

† *John* 6. 27. *Mat.* 5. 33. *Luke* 3. 24. *Luke* 10 27. * *Rev.* 3. 15. § *Luke* 13. 24. *Mat.* 20. 16.

is the Way that leadeth to Life, and few there be that find it; and in other words to the same effect, *that many are call'd, but few are Chosen*; which is so terrible a Truth, that it must needs be a very powerful Influence to engage us in a careful and vigorous discharge of this great Work, if but seriously consider'd and laid to Heart; since the consequences of the neglect of it are no less than everlasting Misery and Vengeance; which if they cannot be thought of without Horror and Amazement, how much more Dreadful and intolerable must it be to endure 'em? so that we have Arguments of all Sorts, to work upon our Hope and Fear, Love and Gratitude, Duty and Interest proposed to us for this Purpose, and therefore we are utterly unexcuseable, if we are not influenced by 'em.

Thus having consider'd the Work we are sent into the World for, and our Obligations to a careful and vigorous discharge of it; I proceed 3dly to consider the time and excellent Opportunities afforded us for this Purpose.

Now this time is generally the term and duration of our present Life, which is so highly Precious and Valuable, that no worldly Enjoyments are worth it, nothing we are Possess'd of can Countervail it, as being the Ground and Basis of them all; and so exceeding Beneficial and Advantageous to us, that we may avoid endless Misery, and enjoy infinite Bliss and Happiness by improving and making the right use of it; a time of Grace Mercy and Compassion; a time which the fallen Angels were not allow'd to Enjoy, and which there are Thousands now confined to the dismal shades of everlasting

Darkness

Darkneſs, and weltering in the Flames of Hell for the loſs of ; a time, wherein we may ſecure the favour of God, and obtain the Pardon of our Sins ; which the moſt bitter Wailings and Lamentations, and the moſt exquiſite Tortures and Sufferings cannot procure us in another Life. O how thankful then ſhould we be for this ſingular Advantage ! how frugal and chary of theſe precious Moments ! and how careful and diligent to improve and make the right uſe of them ! for as precious and valuable as our Time is ; yet is it both of a very ſhort and uncertain Duration, and withal of ſuch a Nature, that when once Loſt, it can never be Retriev'd ; for this is manifeſtly our Caſe, we are all under the irreverſible ſentence of Death, and our Life is only in the Nature of a diſcretionary Reprieve ; and therefore ſo precarious and uncertain that we cannot tell, how ſoon it may Expire : And accordingly what is every Corps we ſee, every paſſing Bell we hear, every Diſtemper we labour under but ſo many broad Hints and Remembrances of our approaching Diſſolution ? how then can we anſwer it to our Selves, if we ſquander and trifle away ſo great and ineſtimable a Bleſſing ? eſpecially when we conſider what excellent Means, Opportunities and Advantages we enjoy therein.

For there is no Creature in the World, that do's not furniſh us with Means and Advantages of knowing and ſerving God, they being all contriv'd and order'd by Divine Providence in ſuch a manner, that they manifeſtly tend to this End. For if we look up, in the words of the Royal Pſalmiſt, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſets forth his handy Work*, i, e. the vaſt extent of them, and

and the Glorious luminaries placed therein, their ſtupendous Magnitude, Beauty, Number and Order proclaim the infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the great Creator. If we look about us and caſt an Eye upon the Earth and the Sea we may obſerve the one Water'd with the fruitful Showers and Dew of Heaven, beautified with Hills and Dales, Woods and Rivers; and Stocked with a numberleſs variety of Animals, Inſects and Vegetables, each of them curiouſly and wonderfully Wrought, and all directed to their proper Ends and Uſes: And the other keeping within its ſtated Bounds, obſerving its alternate Succeſſions of Ebbing and Flowing, and containing the like Aſtoniſhing variety of Creatures, of ſtrange and ſurprizing Forms and Sizes, which loudly call for our utmoſt Reverence and Adoration of the infinite and incomprehenſible Author of them: And if we reflect upon our Selves, the curious Fabrick of our Bodies, and the noble faculties of our Souls, are ſo many amazing Inſtances of our Obligations to our Sovereign Lord and Maker. Thus all things that we can fix our Eyes or Thoughts upon, afford us ſome profitable Hints and Remembrances of our Duty. Nor is there any thing that befals us here on Earth, whether they be the Goods or Evils of it, but may likewiſe prove Uſeful and Beneficial to us, or Conducive to our Salvation: And when any of them becomes a Bar or an Obſtacle to it, it is purely owing to our Abuſe of them: For even our Calamities and Afflictions themſelves are apparently deſign'd for our Spiritual Benefit and Advantage; for this is the Teſtimony of the Royal Prophet, *it was good for me to be afflicted, that I might learn thy Law.* Nay, even our moſt inveterate Enemy the Devil, notwithſtanding

ſtanding his numerous Wiles and Temptations, may in one reſpect prove ſerviceable to us in this great work of our Salvation, by rendering us more careful and diligent about it; and even Death it ſelf, tho' the moſt dreadful of all our temporal Evils, may be improved into ſo great a *Bleſſing*, as to be no more than a paſſage to everlaſting Reſt and Happineſs.

And as the whole viſible Creation, and every thing befalls us here on Earth are thus Manifeſtly deſign'd to promote the great work of our Salvation; ſo are the bleſſed Spirits above, the holy Angels diſparch'd to Miniſter to us for this very End: Nay the infinite Majeſty of Heaven, the eternal Son of God was pleas'd to condeſcend and ſtoop ſo low as to aſſume our humane Nature, and therein to live a miſerable Life and die an execrable Death for the ſake of it; this being the manifeſt drift and deſign of all the excellent and ſublime Doctrines he taught of all the Gracious and wonderful Works he did; and all the bitter and exquiſite Sufferings he endured when he lay Hanging, Bleeding, and Expireing upon the Croſs for us; which ſhould inflame our hearts, and melt them into Raptures of *Praiſes* and Adoration for this amazing Inſtance of Divine Goodneſs to the ſinful Race of Mankind.

And tho' he is Aſcended into Heaven, and now ſitteth at the right hand of the Majeſty on High; yet is he no leſs mindful of us, but receive's our Prayers, and preſents them to his Father, and powerfully intercedes with him in our Behalf, and is daily viſiting us with the bleſſed influences of his

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holy Spirit, as the Sun warm's and enlighten's us with it's Beam's: And moreover has appointed a whole order of Men to take care of Peoples Souls, by reminding 'em of their Duty, Praying for them, and instructing them in the way to Heaven.

To All these sundry other excellent Advantages might be added, if time would permit; But I shall at present but just hint at one of them; and that is the inestimable Advantages we have of living within the Pale of Christs Church; and being *Members* of the purest part of it in the World, and thereby enjoying the blessed Sacraments, and Gods reveal'd Will recorded in holy writ; the former whereof he has instituted to be the means and instruments, whereby all the Merits of Christ's death are convey'd and applied to us, all the Aids and Assistances of Divine Grace are confer'd upon us, our Sins wash'd away, and our Souls nourish'd and refresh'd with the spiritual sustenance of his most precious *Body* and Blood: And the latter to be a *Light to our Feet, and a Lantern to our Paths*, in order to direct our Steps in the way to Heaven.

Now how infinitely obliged are we to Divine Providence for this glorious light of the Gospel which, notwithstanding our great unworthiness, and repeated prevocations still shines among us, whilst so many other famous Countries, that formerly enjoy'd it in common with us, have been long since depriv'd of it, and over run with Ignorance and Superstition; and the far greater part of the

World is cover'd with Darkneſs and the ſhadow of Death. And ſhould not all theſe diſtinguiſhing favours, theſe peculiar Advantages engage us *to Work the Work of him that ſent us while it is Da*, or while we enjoy this inestimable time and Opportunities for it, which that we may be the further induced to do, I proceed 4thly, to Conſider the great danger of neglecting or deferring this Work, implied in theſe laſt words of my Text, *the Night cometh, wherein no Man can Work.*

Indeed had this been a work, that might have been done, when we pleas'd; or ſuch as might be Repair'd or Corrected, when ever we ſhould perceive our Miſtakes; then it would not have been ſo dangerous an Adventure and ſo terrible a Riſk to defer it.

But alaſs! this is ſo far from being the true ſtate of our Caſe, that it is juſt the *reverſe* of it; for do we not all readily Acknowledge it as a matter incontestably evident, that when we die, there is no poſſibility of renewing our Preparations; that when we depart hence, there is no returning to repair what we have done amiſs; and that if we once expire in our Sins, we are ruined and undone for ever; ſo that † *now only is the Accepted time, now only is the day of Salvation*; and therefore in caſe we neglect the bleſſed Opportunities that now Offer, it is much to be fear'd that we

† 2 Cor. 6. 2.

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ſhall never enjoy the like again. O how careful and ſollicitous ſhould we then be to mind this great, and important Affair, when our all thus lies at ſtake! and how can we be thoughtleſs and unconcerned, when we have a work of ſuch vaſt importance to be imploy'd in, that no leſs than our everlaſting Intereſt depends upon it! But beſides theſe dismal Conſequences of deferring this Work with reſpect to another Life, the danger of this neglect will further appear, if we conſider how abſolutely neceſſary the Performance of it is to qualify us for a comfortable Death. For Death is a thing ſo terrible and ſhocking in its ſelf, and ſo dangerous in its conſequence, that nothing in the World can afford us any Comfort or Support Under it, in caſe we are not beſore hand prepar'd for it.

Good Men indeed may bear up and take heart under the very Pangs and Agonies of this King of Terrors, as having infallible aſſurances, that God will receive 'em into thoſe bleſs'd Manſions which he has prepar'd for his faithful Servants, ſo that Death to 'em is no more than a paſſage to the Kingdom of everlaſting Light and Glory. But on the other hand, what lamentable ſorrow and Anguiſh, what unconceivable Horror and Deſpair will overwhelm the Wicked, when they are in this doleful Plunge, when all they ever heard of Judgment, Hell and Eternity will croud themſelves into their thoughts, and cut and ſting 'em to the very Heart; when they'll with a Thouſand times they had been more careful of their Conduct and Behaviour, and bitterly accuſe and condemn themſelves for their Wretched ſtupidity and

infatuation in neglecting the one thing neceſſary; preferring the trifling Advantages of time to the vaſt and important intereſt of Eternity, and letting their endleſs concerns run to Ruin; by not improving thoſe excellent Means and Opportunities that have been ſo long afforded them, but now they find to their unſpeakable Sorrow are no longer to be enjoy'd, and that nothing remains, but the dark and diſmal proſpect of an Eternity of inceſſant and uninterrupted Miſeries unconceivably great and intenſly Exquiſite beyond imagination.

However, ſuppoſe we might eſcape all theſe ſevere remorſes of Conſcience, theſe cutting Thoughts and diſmal Apprehenſions upon our Death Beds; yet would there ſtill remain no ſmall danger in deferring this Work: For as it is a Work of the greateſt Conſequence and Importance to us, ſo it cannot be done Precipitately and in haſte, but requires particular Care and Application to accompliſh it.

And therefore it is, that we are Admoniſh'd in Scripture ¶ *to give all diligence, to make our Calling and Election ſure, and to Work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*; And to the ſame purpoſe is that warning of our bleſſed Saviour, ‖ *the Son of Man will come in a Day, that he do not expect*; and the Parable of the ten *Virgins, Five whereof were ſhut out of the Mar-*

¶ 2 Pet. 1. 10. ‖ Matth. 24. 42. * Luke 12. 45. Matthew 25. 1.

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riage Feaſt, becauſe they had not provided Oil in their Lamps, or came ſhort of the Joys of Heaven for want of this preparatory Diſpoſition for 'em, or the faithful Diſcharge of this great Work required to qualify them for this bleſſed End; which how nearly it concerns us inſtantly to ſet about, will ſtill further Appear if we conſider Laſtly, how uncertain and extreme difficult this Work is render'd by deferring of it.

For who that conſiders the numerous Diſtempers, dangers and all Accidents we are daily Subject to in this Mortal Life, and the ſundry Inſtances of Mortality, that offer themſelves to our View at all Times and in all Places, can be Bail for his Life for one ſingle Minute, for there is not a Moment that paſſes over our Heads, but may prove our Laſt, and there is not one Hour in the Day wherein ſundry Perſons are not Arreſted by Death, and Hurried away to their long Home. And who knows how ſoon this may prove his own Caſe; For are not our Neighbours daily Dropping round about us, who having equal Advantages of Health, Strength and Vigor with our Selves, had as little reaſon to expect Death as any of us? And may not the ſame unwholeſome Air, the ſame Raging Fevers, the ſame Contagious and fatal Diſtempers that have made ſuch a terrible Havock and Deſtruction round about us, diſpatch and deprive us of our Lives as well as Others? and ſhould we eſcape theſe and other unforeſeen Dangers and Accidents, are not our Lives entirely at Gods diſpoſal, who can ſhorten and lengthen as he Pleaſes? However, admit we could be certain, we ſhould

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be permitted to live several Years, yet who can assure us, that our day of Grace will be of so long a Continuance? For by deferring this Work we provoke Divine Vengeance if not to Cut us off, as we have just grounds to fear, yet at least to withdraw his Grace from us for our horrid Abuse of it, for he has expressly Declar'd *that his Spirit will not always strive with Man*; and that as to him that has, or makes a right use of what he has, will be given; so from him that has not, or makes not the right use of it, will be taken even what he has, which will render this Work utterly impossible to be Accomplish'd.

But besides the danger of being deprived of our Lives and Divine Grace, we have this further Reason to Convince us how great a Hazard we run by deferring this Work, that it's exceeding difficult to quit ill Habits that we've long contracted and Liv'd in; for when these are once deeply Rooted and Rivetted in us, tis next to impossible ever to extricate and disingage our selves from 'em according to that remarkable Testimony of the Prophet *Jerem.* † *can the Æthiopian Change his Colour or the Leopard his Spots*; then may he do Good that has been accustom'd to do Evil.

O let us all then in this our Day, mind this great and important Concern that belongs to our Peace before it be hid from our Eyes, always remembering the words of my Text, *I must Work the Work of him that sent me while it is Day, the Night cometh wherein no Man can Work.* Which God of his infinite Mercy grant we may all do for Jesus Christ's sake to whom, &c.

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